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Title: Need to provide special relief package for revival of Tea Industry.

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA (ALIPURDUAR): Sir, since 1998 Tea industry has been passing through a bad phase, resulting in closure of several Tea Gardens. Ultimately, labour force has to suffer a lot. They are deprived of their statutory benefits as per the Plantation Labour Act, wages are not paid timely as it should have been done. Further medical facilities are suspended; rations are not provided regularly; Provident Fund and LIC premium, although deducted from the salary of the workers, are not deposited at the respective accounts; and PF and Gratuity are not paid to the employees even after retirement.

Replanatation and rejuvenation were not done for long. One lakh seventy two thousand hectares and 42,000 hectares of land required to be replanted and rejuvenated respectively in the existing Tea Gardens. It was given an impression by the hon. Commerce Minister that a package of relief would be announced during the Budget Session to support the Tea industry. Except withdrawal of surcharge of Re.1.00 on one kilogram of Tea, quantum of sum required for revival of Tea industry was not declared as yet. Hence, I would request the hon. Minister of Commerce to expedite the matter and a package of relief for the Tea industry may be announced immediately.